

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

Direction needed to put city on track

Vernonia City Councilmember Jan Miyasaki resigned recently citing the frustration created by inadequate knowledge and lack of direction as the reason for her resignation.

Lack of information and direction affects the city's operations in many ways, however, and creates problems far greater than frustration.

There is no clear line of command between the council and city employees. Often when the council decides on an action, nothing is done to implement the decision. When a city employee is asked why no action was taken, the response usually is "I wasn't told to do anything; I just do what I'm told." This happens on a regular basis, even when the employees attend the council meetings and know of the decisions.

Lack of information creates many problems, yet is related to the lack of direction. In January three new people were seated as council members - Miyasaki, Mario Leonetti and Tom Buffington - while the remaining member, Rob Richards, had been appointed only three months earlier. Mayor Wallace Vaughn was the only experienced elected official at the council table, yet the new members had to practically demand that they be given enough information to start doing their jobs. It is, unfortunately, still difficult for the council to obtain adequate and accurate information.

A new city attorney, Tom Kohl, started in January, too, and compounded the problem. Kohl was unfamiliar with much of the city's business in progress, and his advice to the council was frequently tenuous and unclear. He is becoming more comfortable in the position, but still answers far too many questions with "I don't know," or "I didn't have time to study the file." Whether he is, or not, Kohl gives the appearance of being unprepared for his role of legal counsel.

Lack of legal direction resulted in slowing down the city's clean-up campaign. It started with vigor, but without adequate direction, got bogged down and had to start over.

Vernonia is going to go farther into the financial hole, too, with sewer problems and long unsettled lawsuits. But it doesn't have to continue that way.

This may be the time to consider hiring a city administrator. An experienced, knowledgeable person would be able to provide the administrative, analytical and technical expertise that is desperately needed.

An administrator would require a good salary, but that salary would eventually be absorbed by the financial gains that come with good management. Sooner or later, Vernonians are going to have to realize that the low tax base in the city is costing them more than it's saving them.

Miyasaki's points are well taken. Now what will be next?

Between the Bookends

By Sandy Nimz
City Librarian

It truly is Christmas in July at the library. I recently applied for a Rural/Small Library Access Grant. The goal of this grant is to provide rural and small public libraries in Oregon with microcomputer equipment which will enable them to utilize fully the Oregon Public Access Catalog at the State Library, a service referred to as O.P.A.C.

The reason I feel that Christmas has arrived early is

that Vernonia is one of only 30 Oregon libraries to be selected for this grant. I am very excited about the unlimited amount of books we will now have access to. Many of our library users do, in fact, order all kinds of books from the State Library. We will receive our microcomputer sometime after September 1, and no later than October 31.

Of course, I can hardly wait. This is really a wonderful opportunity for us to expand our library services. As soon as I learn how to use



and operate our new addition, be sure to stop by and order the special book you've wanted to read, but wasn't available in our collection.

Oh, by the way, Christmas is only 154 days away, a mere 5 months. I have a nice new book entitled Christmas is Coming 1987!! Keep reading and I'll see you soon at the library.

Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

Vernonia: A good place to live.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow businessmen, my friends and neighbors of Vernonia for their cards and their expressions of hope and comfort to my wife and family.

I also want to thank the churches and prayer groups for all the prayers on my behalf.

I am sure that it is because of God's help through all the prayers that I am able to say thank you today.

All this closeness and caring can only be in a small community like Vernonia.

Thank you all.

Marv Meyers
Sears Catalog Merchant
Vernonia

To the Editor:

Having resigned my position as a member of the Vernonia City Council, I feel it necessary to explain why I arrived at that decision.

I accepted the position as City Councilperson, having an open mind, good attitude and the naive idea that I could do something good for the community. I have since learned that one person cannot make a difference without help from members of this city. The frustration of making decisions on very little knowledge of the subject have caused great problems in the past.

Your City Council continues to work on those problems and creating new problems for future councils due to the lack of time to analyze and evaluate the situation to make a proper decision. I feel a City Manager, with the right qualifications, could relieve this problem. All the departments of this city need a source of experienced direction.

The citizens must be made aware of the major problems

facing the city. Financial strain of major litigation and seemingly insurmountable sewer problems has put a stranglehold on our city's budget. Without financial help and support of the citizens, this city's future is in question.

The frustration of all the above problems and not being able to make a difference has made me come to the decision that maybe someone else can find a way to handle these situations. My personal feelings stem from having to live with the decisions that I make. I can no longer continue without progress.

I wish the best of luck to my replacement and I pray that the citizens of this community will band together to support an effort for a change in the city's government.

Sincerely,
Jan Miyasaki

To the Editor:

First, I would like to thank Dirk and Noni Andersen for providing, thru the Independent, the basis for any good democracy - a free press.

Second, I would like to thank everyone who has contributed, either financially or with their time, to the cause of stopping the siting of Bacoa landfill. And although we may have been knocked down, we are not knocked out, folks!

The DEQ has admitted that this site may well not be the best place to dump all of Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington Counties' garbage (not to mention their hazardous waste), but the place with the least amount of money and people to prevent it. Don't let other people decide the future of Vernonia - even our own elected officials have no clout on this topic.

Do we want people saying "Oh yeah, Vernonia, that's where the dump is." or "Oh yeah, Vernonia, that's where the world class observatory is!" You can't have both, people.

Help us in our fight to keep Vernonia alive and healthy. You can help with your time or financial contributions. United we stand; divided we fall.

D.D.O.V.E. (Don't Dump on Vernonia's Environment) meets the 1st Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. at the library. For further information call Roxana Sherman, 429-1821, or Patti Jensen, 429-2860, or write to D.D.O.V.E. at 847 Bridge Street, Vernonia, OR 97064.

Patti Jensen
Vernonia

To the Editor:

The Misty Meadows Horse 4-H Club would like to thank the people of Vernonia who helped support our 4-H Club by saving newspapers for us, attending our rabies clinic and participating in our raffle this year. A special thank you to Dr. Plummer for having the rabies clinic. Also to our parents a big hug and kiss for their support.

There were four members who showed at Columbia County Fair and did very well. One member went along and helped wherever she was needed. Kerry, your help was really appreciated. At the fair Nathan Pieren won the Presentation Award for Juniors, Preston Gibson won the All Around Pony award and the Junior Western Equitation award. Kari Nerheim and Michelle Fowler qualified for the State Fair.

Submitted by
Michelle Fowler
Preston Gibson
Nathan Pieren
Kerry Schaumburg
Kari Nerheim